Anticipating audiences

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2 Anticipating Audiences: Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Cognitive Psychology

Introduction

Ehninger in his article 'On systems of rhetoric' claimed that, "hampered by the primitive psychology and epistemology with which they worked … the classical writers tended either to scant or to present a patently naive account of the relation between the speech act and the mind of the listener".[1] Nisbet describes how Hesiod is cast by Martin West, the poet's most prominent commentator, as "a 'primitive' poet, carried to and fro by the miscellaneous and contrary urges of the Indo-European story-telling tradition".[2] In this chapter I will analyse Hesiod's *Works and Days* using modern psychological research in order to reveal quite the contrary: that the archaic Greek wisdom tradition presents a high degree of cognitive sophistication, and in particular that the poet demonstrates a great deal of audience awareness. I aim not to impose modern thought anachronistically on an ancient poem, but rather to use the cognitive sciences as a tool to tease out some interesting aspects of Hesiod's didactic project. This is not to say that these aspects have thus far gone unnoticed: many have been discussed through different, more established, scholarly traditions. Yet the value of an analysis grounded in psychology is that it foregrounds ways of thinking: as does Hesiod's *didaxis*. Further, in bringing together archaic wisdom and what is considered to be a modern science we can reflect both on the (often underestimated) complexity of early poetry and on the ancestry of a modern discipline. Such an analysis can make us aware of the transmission of knowledge as a constant in human endeavours: of changing content and mechanisms, but a persistent drive to teach, to learn, and to put one's learning into practice.

Hesiod's *Works and Days* was experienced in antiquity in two ways: as a piece of extended instruction performed in its own right, and as a repository of lines that, when detached from their original context, could be applied to almost any scenario. Through selection, structure and formulation of material, through conscious crafting and consistent moral direction, it is a poem that shapes, up to

1 Ehninger (1968) 134.
2 Nisbet (2004) 150.

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a point, its own reception.[3] I will argue that part of this shaping involves anticipating multiple audiences: a complex cognitive task. Kroll notes of audience awareness in antiquity: "while the importance of audience was acknowledged, there is little elaboration of the concept of audience among the major Greek and Roman theorists".[4] I hope to show that whilst the theory may have been lacking (something which modern psychology more than makes up for), the practice was flourishing.

Chafe defines consciousness as "the locus of remembering, imagining, and feeling".[5] Classics and cognitive psychology have come together in looking at Greek literature in terms of remembering and feeling.[6] Work between the fields begins to be done on imagining, for example that of Luigi Battezzato on persuasion and deliberation in Greek tragedy as acts of projection of the self.[7] I would like to pursue the cognitive experience of imagining, in terms of envisaged modes of reading and reception. I will be using Berkenkotter's article "Understanding a writer's awareness of audience", mapping her categories of audience-related considerations onto Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[8]

Audience-Related Activities: Coding Categories

I. Analyzing/Constructing a Hypothetical Audience
   A. Considering facts about the audience given in the assignment (age, grade level)
   B. Constructing hypothetical audience characteristics (demographic location, ethnic background)

3 See Canevaro (2015), and further note 38 below.

4 Kroll (1978) 270.

5 Chafe (1994) 38.

6 On remembering, see e.g. Minchin (2001); Bakker (2005); Clay (2011). See also Rubin (1995) on the cognitive psychology of memory in oral traditions. Though my primary focus in this chapter is on imagining, I will also be concerned with memory, and more specifically the different types of memory triggered by the audience-awareness devices used in the *Works and Days*. On feeling, e.g. Konstan (2006), Cairns (2008).

7 Unpublished paper, delivered at the University of Edinburgh January 2014: "Debates and deliberation in Euripides: the *agōn logōn* in context".

8 The application of criteria is never without problems. We need only think of the endless attempts to categorise didactic poetry, to demarcate a genre that is nebulous at best. And yet, as a heuristic tool it can be useful - and indeed, using criteria that are unrelated to the question 'what is didactic?' can have a particularly strong impact on our understanding of the Works and Days. For another reading of Hesiod's poetry through criteria new and different, see Vergados (forthcoming): a reinterpretation of Hesiod as a historian.

C. Making simple inferences from the description of the audience, which may or may not be accurate
D. Making complex inferences (more than one) from the description of the audience
E. Identifying self with audience (role-playing)
F. Identifying audience with self (projecting)
G. Creating rhetorical context in oral protocol
H. Creating rhetorical context in written text

II. Goal Setting and Planning for a Specific Audience
A. Generating audience-related goals
B. Naming audience-related plans
C. Generating sub-goals or refinements of the plan
D. Consolidating several sub-goals to carry out the plan
E. 'Satisficing' (temporarily eliminating some sub-goals of the plan to carry out others)
F. Representing oneself to the audience (*persona*)

III. Evaluating Content and Style with Regard to Anticipated Audience Response
A. Evaluating audience response to content (may be about text being considered or completed text)
B. Evaluating audience response to style (*persona*)

Berkenkotter (1981, 398–399, extract)

The context is rather different: Berkenkotter is analysing a writing assignment, and I am dealing with a poem that originated in an oral tradition. Berkenkotter poses questions directly to authors, whereas with the Hesiodic tradition the issue of authorship is hotly debated. However, the article does have a number of things to recommend it. Firstly, the categories are a useful starting point. It is a typology which has since been much used, I think because it does not impose pedagogical theory and its concomitant constraints on the analysis but draws out a number of key issues which are individually addressed elsewhere in the cognitive sciences. Secondly, the study used 'thinking aloud' protocols in an attempt to track what writers are thinking while they are writing. This goes some way towards bridging the divide between writing and orality, and gives us an important insight into the mechanisms of composition. Thirdly, the contexts do have something in common: teaching. Berkenkotter's assignment is to describe one's career choice to a high-school audience. This is essentially both an autobiographical and a didactic task (involving describing, informing and persuading), and so arguably has more relevance to Hesiod's didactic poem with its immanent, ostensibly autobiographical, narrative persona than would a study concerned with writing fiction. Yet fiction leads me to Berkenkotter's first category.

Analysing/Constructing a Hypothetical Audience

"The writer's audience is always a fiction".[9] This does not hold quite so true in an original performance context of an oral poem, as the audience are physically present and their reaction – not to mention their attention span – are immediately evident. However, it does pertain to future envisaged performances or other avenues of reception. Felix Budelmann has recently argued that the complex temporal markers embedded by Pindar in his epinician odes anticipate not just a one-off performance but also future *re*performances:[10] and I would argue that Hesiod's *Works and Days* does much the same thing.

Hesiod (by which I mean both a persona and a driving force behind the poem, something I shall come back to) is very clear about his ideal audience:

> οὗτος μὲν πανάριστος, ὃς αὐτὸς πάντα νοήσει,
> φρασσάμενος, τά κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦσιν ἀμείνω·
> ἐσθλὸς δ' αὖ καὶ κεῖνος, ὃς εὖ εἰπόντι πίθηται·
> ὃς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοέῃ μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
> ἐν θυμῷ βάλληται, ὁ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρήιος ἀνήρ.
>
> That man is altogether the best, he who thinks of everything himself,
> considering the things which are then better in the end.
> He too is good, who listens to one who speaks well.
> But he who does not think for himself nor listening to another
> considers in his heart, this man is useless.
> *Works and Days* 293–297[11]

The audience must have some kind of drive to learn, repeatedly exhorted as they are to "consider" (φράζεσθαι), to "remember" (μεμνημένος) – to work hard for Hesiod's advice, to store it up and use it at another time. This drive to learn is known in cognitive studies as a 'need for cognition'. There is, of course, a questionnaire to quantify this need: Cacioppo and Petty's *Need for Cognition Scale* (1984). Statements with which to agree or disagree include: "I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours", and "I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles

9 Ong (1975) 9.
10 Budelmann (2017).
11 All *Works and Days* text is taken from West (1978); all translations are my own.

I must solve" – and reverse-scored statements such as "I only think as hard as I have to", and "Thinking is not my idea of fun". The *Works and Days* anticipates an audience that would score highly on such a scale. Higher scores have been linked with better verbal reasoning, higher fluid intelligence and even greater life satisfaction, so the active approach Hesiod encourages is set to be a fulfilling one. As Minchin notes (of Homeric epic, but which can be applied equally to Hesiodic didactic), "a story is deemed by its listeners to be more enjoyable if they have been encouraged to play an active role in the storytelling".[12] Furthermore, as Clements argues, "If listeners were made to search hard for the right answer, then, when they got it, they would remember the point clearly".[13] Hesiod is constructing cognitive patterns for his audience to adopt on a long-term basis.

Under this first category, Berkenkotter includes 'role-playing' (identifying self with audience) and 'projecting' (identifying audience with self). Hesiod negotiates both: the former in his anticipating multiple generalised audiences, and the latter in his personal interjections. In his fable of the hawk and the nightingale (202–212), for example, the inconsistencies in any one specific application of the story point towards multiple identifications, allowing the poet to identify with multiple audiences simultaneously.[14] Moreover, potential identifications do not stop at the level of the poem but can be detached and applied by the audience. Whether you are a hawk or a nightingale, as it were, you must consider the implications of the story for yourself. Through role-playing, through mapping Hesiod's advice onto our own lives, we activate a particular modality of memory: kinetic memory. In this modality – not restricted to movement as we might expect, but to do with experience, emotion and personal motivation[15] – the encoding and retrieval technique focuses on a key word, person or event that is meaningful to the learner. The material becomes anchored in memory because the learner has made an affective investment in it.

In terms of projecting, Hesiod twice treats us to his own opinion. With the first interjection, he situates himself explicitly (and discontentedly) within the Iron Age:

> μηκέτ' ἔπειτ' ὤφελλον ἐγὼ πέμπτοισι μετεῖναι
>
> ἀνδράσιν, ἀλλ' ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι.
>
> νῦν γὰρ δὴ γένος ἐστὶ σιδήρεον·

12 Minchin (2001) 215.
13 Clements (2000) 28.
14 On this passage and for a survey of the interpretations, see Canevaro (2015) 54–60.
15 Schwartz/Power (2000) 404.

Would then that I was no longer among the fifth race of

men, but either died earlier or was born later.

For now indeed it is a race of iron.

Works and Days 174–176

Hesiod allies himself with his audience, inspiring confidence. Who better to be emulated by the Iron-Age man than one of us? The interjection is a 'rhetorical sigh':[16] an exclamation of dismay at the current state of things, and trepidation about the dire future Hesiod predicts. However, it is not quite an exclamation of despair, as the fact that Hesiod offers so much advice suggests that he believes in his own didactic authority: follow Hesiod's advice and the future *can* change. In the second instance, Hesiod seems to give his opinion on 'current' justice:

νῦν δὴ ἐγὼ μήτ' αὐτὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποισι δίκαιος

εἴην μήτ' ἐμὸς υἱός, ἐπεὶ κακὸν ἄνδρα δίκαιον

ἔμμεναι, εἰ μείζω γε δίκην ἀδικώτερος ἕξει·

ἀλλὰ τά γ' οὔ πω ἔολπα τελεῖν Δία μητιόεντα.

Now I myself would not be just among men,

nor would I wish my son to be, since it is evil for a man to be just

if the more unjust man will have greater justice.

But I hope that counsellor Zeus will not yet let these things happen.

Works and Days 270–273

He does not want to be part of a world where injustice is rewarded. However, as with the decline of the Iron Race, the situation has not yet come to this, and Hesiod hopes that Zeus will not let it. Again, he offsets his apocalyptic warning with a dose of optimism – which we can extrapolate as being contingent on our own behaviour.

Goal Setting and Planning for a Specific Audience

As well as anticipating multiple unnamed audiences, the *Works and Days* also has two explicit addressees: Perses (Hesiod's wayward brother), and the

16 Verdenius (1985) *ad loc*.

corrupt 'gift-swallowing' kings.[17] Indeed, the fable of the hawk and the nightingale is addressed to the kings (202 νῦν δ' αἶνον βασιλεῦσ' ἐρέω), but its moral is directed to Perses (213 ὦ Πέρση, σὺ δ' ἄκουε Δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε): Hesiod switches between these named didactic targets, and implicitly includes his wider audience in the process.[18] At this point I would like to return to the issue of fiction, and its role in anticipating audiences, as the invention of an internal addressee is in essence a work of fiction. Up until the late twentieth century, Hesiodic scholars were preoccupied with whether or not Perses was the real brother of a real Hesiod.[19] In recent decades, however, scholarly engagement with the character has shifted towards seeing him as a literary or didactic tool, regardless of whether or not he existed. This is logical, as the fallacy of biographical reconstruction is that even when poets choose to include autobiographical fact in their work, they do so because it makes poetic sense. Therefore the presumed existence of Perses can never fully explain his inclusion in the *Works and Days*. Whether he existed or not, he is constructed as the perfect didactic addressee, exhibiting all the faults Hesiod wants to highlight and acting as a convenient base for Hesiod's teachings.

A narrative thread which runs throughout the poem and which lends the disparate material a degree of continuity is what Jenny Strauss Clay has called 'the education of Perses'. If followed in a linear fashion, the advice given to Perses seems to indicate that he gradually learns from his brother, and changes his behaviour incrementally, meeting goals along the way. Keith Oatley argues of ancient literature that "The first literary characters have traits, very much like personality traits in psychology or reputations in the minds of others: more-or-less unchanging dispositions".[20] Perses certainly has traits, and more specifically flaws as his main role is to act as the negative exemplar with the bad reputation.[21] However, as Clay has shown, he *can* be taught: perhaps Oatley underestimates these 'first literary characters'. Further, Oatley (drawing on Auerbach's *Mimesis*) identifies Dante as "the first writer to depict character in the modern sense", isolating as an important move in European literature the fact that "He transfers action and truth from heaven … to here on earth. The idea

17 Cf. Berkenkotter's category V.B 'Directly addressing audience in text'.

18 This addressing of (at least) two audiences fits another of the 'Miscellaneous Audience-related Activities' under Berkenkotter's section V.

19 See e.g. Latimer (1930); Forbes (1950); Griffith (1983).

20 Oatley (2011) 89.

21 On the development of Perses over the course of the poem, see Canevaro (2015) 26–29; on autobiography Canevaro (2015) 41–43, Canevaro (2017); on the importance of the brother-to-brother didactic model for Hesiod's particular project, Canevaro (2017).

of character is not of people whose traits of personality remain unexplained, or of fate which cannot be apprehended. It's of people appraising events for their emotional implication and, as a result, acting on matters that are important to them here on earth." Laying aside the difficulty of terms such as 'writer' and 'literature', that, I would argue, is exactly what the *Works and Days* is all about. Perses' traits are explained: we are told what he has done wrong, why he has done it and what he needs to change to do better. Iron-Age matters take centre stage, with earth-dwelling mortals left for the most part to their own devices, to make their own fate through justice or injustice. Truth is transferred from heaven to earth in line 10:

> Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης ὃς ὑπέρτατα δώματα ναίει.
>
> κλῦθι ἰδὼν ἀιών τε, δίκῃ δ' ἴθυνε θέμιστας
>
> τύνη· ἐγὼ δέ κε Πέρσῃ ἐτήτυμα μυθησαίμην.
>
> Zeus the high-thunderer who lives in the highest halls.
>
> Listen to me, seeing and hearing, and you: make laws straight with justice.
>
> But I shall tell true things to Perses.
>
> *Works and Days* 8–10

The juxtaposition "you: I" (τύνη· ἐγώ) contrasts Zeus' job which has been prescribed in the previous line (to straighten out the laws) with Hesiod's own, essentially didactic, task: to tell his brother some home truths. Whether Perses is real or fictional, Hesiod is adamant about the truth of his teachings, and this sets the tone of his didactic authority. Oatley writes: "It takes a certain generosity to engage with a new person. In the same way, it takes a certain generosity to enter into a relationship with a poem … One needs to trust the author".[22] Already here in the proem of the *Works and Days* Hesiod sets out his goals as teacher, plans for and names a specific audience, and by invoking truth gains the trust of internal and external audience alike. One of Berkenkotter's sub-categories is "Representing oneself to the audience (*persona*)": from this early point in the poem Hesiod establishes an authoritative, independent didactic persona, promising to sing a song tangential to that of the Muses,[23]

22 Oatley (2011) 100–101.

23 On the Muses' song as tangential to Hesiod's own, see Clay (2003) 72–78; Haubold (2010) 21. On the contrasting Homeric model of poet's and Muses' voices blending, see Graziosi/Haubold (2010) 1–8.

to tackle a task different from that of Zeus, and to set his brother back on the straight and narrow.

Evaluating Content and Style with Regard to Anticipated Audience Response

This category, too, might be approached in terms of truth. Oatley writes: "Modern psychology as science has allied itself with only one kind of truth: truth as empirical correspondence ... If psychology is to be fully psychology, there must be consideration of two other kinds of truth as well: truth as coherence within complex structures and truth as personal relevance. Empirical psychology obeys criteria of the first type of truth. Fiction fails this criterion but can meet the other two. One could say, then, that fiction can be twice as true as fact".[24] This is a provocative statement, to say the least, but what I would take from it is to suggest that the *Works and Days* is psychologically ambitious as it tackles all three kinds of truth, and that it is these truths which create a strong "student-teacher constellation" (to use Katharina Volk's term).

Hesiod teaches us about the world as it is, describing the Iron-Age human condition so that we might face it. His truth must, therefore, have empirical correspondence: that is, it must reflect, more or less accurately, the perceivable state of things. One example of this is Hesiod's Calendar (383–617), and in particular Stephanie Nelson's reading of it.[25] This part of the poem is highly descriptive – so much so that sections of it, such as the passage on winter (493–563), have been considered by many scholars to be inconsistent with an ostensibly practical programme.[26] As Nelson has argued, through this description Hesiod presents us with a vivid picture of the seasonally revolving life on a farm and the importance of hard work at the right time, and on the winter passage she notes that "The length of the section reflects not how long the month of January is, but how long it seems to be. There is no task".[27] Hesiod shapes form to fit content, slowing the narrative pace to depict a season lacking in activity. This is a truth which reflects poetically and aesthetically a real-world empirical situation. Another example is Hesiod's penchant for hyper-precision, most evident in his description of

24 Oatley (1999) 102–103.
25 Nelson (1996) and (1998).
26 Most nineteenth century editors rejected the winter passage. See further Canevaro (2015) 73–75.
27 Nelson (1996) 50.

woodcutting (414–447).[28] In contrast to the winter passage, the woodcutting scene is full of hands-on advice and minute technical detail.[29] Much scholarly attention has been given to assessing whether or not the woodcutting is feasible.[30] However, as with the debate over Perses, I would argue that what matters is that through such hyper-precision Hesiod emphatically presents us with a kind of truth: this time not autobiographical, but empirical.

I would like to consider the second type of truth, "coherence within complex structures", in terms of how it is mobilised at a structural level through the arrangement of the *Works and Days*. The poem is made up of a multitude of narrative forms such as myths, fables, proverbs, riddles, precepts and calendars. The complex structure does, however, have an internal coherence, and it is this which an audience must work to uncover. Form maps onto content, as poetic structures teach us about the complexity of human existence. With each narrative form comes a different narrative strategy: some tell stories, some inform, some persuade (or dissuade) – some provide a puzzle. Berkenkotter found that "The writers who verbalized the goal of *persuading* their audience exhibited the greatest frequency and widest distribution of audience-related activities ... In contrast, the writers who decided to *narrate* their personal history showed the lowest frequency and narrowest distribution ... Writers who opted to *inform* fell somewhere in the middle of the spectrum".[31] The type of narrative strategy adopted affects consideration of one's audience. By combining narrative forms and their associated strategies, Hesiod does not limit himself to a small number of audience-related activities but is more likely to engage with the full range.

Each shift in narrative form comes as a novelty: a new generic challenge to which we have to adjust. Research on story comprehension reveals that cognitive processing load is greatest at the beginning and end of a story episode,[32] so when Hesiod introduces a ἕτερόν (...) λόγον at line 106 he is presenting his audience with a heavy cognitive task:

εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις, ἕτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω,

εὖ καὶ ἐπισταμένως, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσιν,

28 On Hesiod's hyper-precision, see Canevaro (2015) 202–208.

29 The woodcutting section has often been criticised for a level of detail that might be considered tedious. However, see Minchin (2001) 79–91 for the cognitive underpinning of lists, and the pleasure an audience might take in such feats of poetic memory.

30 For reconstructions see West (1978) *ad loc.*; Richardson/Piggott (1982); Isager/Skydsgaard (1992) 6–9; Leclerc (1994); Tandy/Neale (1996) 99–103.

31 Berkenkotter (1981) 393.

32 Haberlandt/Berian/Sandson (1980).

> If you wish, I shall summarise another story for you,
>
> well and skillfully, and you take it to heart.
>
> *Works and Days* 106–107

Hesiod himself flags up the value of this shift for the need for cognition, as the line begins εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις, if you wish: he will present his audience with another story, but only if they are up for the challenge. His teachings explicitly require active engagement on the part of the audience. That the correspondences between the ἕτερόν (...) λόγον, that is the Myth of the Races, and the story preceding, the Myth of Prometheus and Pandora, are not immediately evident adds further weight to the process. As our text of the *Works and Days* now stands, this nod to audience participation is crystallised as a rhetorical and didactic device. However, in a context of oral performance we might imagine that such invitations had something genuine in them: perhaps the performer would have taken his cues from the audience and in each instance chosen selectively from a broader repertoire. In particular, we might consider scenes like that of woodcutting in this light: perhaps the performer would have judged the audience's attention span and edited accordingly. This hypothesis conforms with Berkenkotter's fourth category, that of "reviewing, editing, and revising for a specific audience". This is not a category with which we can fully engage in terms of the text as we have it, now a *fait accompli*, but it may apply to an oral poem kept fluid in performance.

The third truth, "personal relevance", takes us to Hesiod himself as immanent narrator. In integrating autobiographical elements – anecdotes from his own life, personal interjections, characters such as his foolish brother Perses and their downtrodden father – Hesiod constructs a personal 'hook' on which we can hang his teachings. The audience will remember and reuse snippets from the *Works and Days* not only because of their mnemonic formulations and wide applicability, but also because of their personality. This taps into another modality of memory: episodic memory which is autobiographical in nature, connected with where we were when we heard something, who told us it, and so on. An immanent narrator is important in giving us that episodic backdrop. Schwartz and Power (2000) argue, further, that the memorisation of maxims more often results in adopting wise behaviour when those maxims are taught within the context of a meaningful relationship with a teacher. Therefore the present persona of Hesiod-as-teacher aids not only rote memorisation, but also enactment.

Furthermore, Hesiod sets us an example of thinking for oneself. He rewrites the genealogy of Eris, Strife, which in the *Theogony* was but one:

οὐκ ἄρα μοῦνον ἔην Ἐρίδων γένος, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν

εἰσὶ δύω· τὴν μέν κεν ἐπαινήσειε νοήσας,

ἡ δ' ἐπιμωμητή· διὰ δ' ἄνδιχα θυμὸν ἔχουσιν.

There was not only one race of Strifes on the earth,

but there are two. One a man would praise having seen her,

the other is blameworthy. They have completely different spirits.

Works and Days 11–13

In this and in many other ways, Hesiod self-consciously breaks away from his own *Theogony*. In the *Works and Days* Hesiod recasts his relationship with the Muses, refines his moral landscape and refocuses his myths in order to mark out the poem as a new, independent didactic project – and himself a new, independent man. This is one way in which Berkenkotter's fourth category "Reviewing, Editing, and Revising for a Specific Audience" might be seen to apply, not to the *Works and Days* in isolation but to the Hesiodic *corpus* more widely.[33] The 'revising' Hesiod does takes place in the space between his poems, as he shifts genre, purpose, and persona.[34] Further, in setting himself up as a model, Hesiod not only epitomises the self-sufficient πανάριστος, but also initiates a self-sufficient mode of learning. He teaches not by prescription but by example – and it is up to the audience to follow that example.[35] Horn and Masunaga (2000) posit that wisdom is not merely an intellectual capacity, but also involves expertise. From this perspective, Hesiod is an ideal teacher as he has practiced what he is preaching.

Brown formulates the issue in another way, suggesting that wisdom is 'more broadly encompassing than expertise. Thus, one might seek the advice of a person one considers wise even within a domain in which this person has no previous direct experience … The wise person is able to see the essence of the problem and suggest meta-strategies for what one should do.'[36] Hesiod embarks on his teachings on seafaring with a caveat:

δείξω δή τοι μέτρα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,

οὔτέ τι ναυτιλίης σεσοφισμένος οὔτέ τι νηῶν·

οὐ γάρ πώ ποτε νηί γ' ἐπέπλων εὐρέα πόντον,

33 This corpus-wide approach to Hesiodic poetry is advocated most importantly in Clay (2003).

34 On genre in the *Works and Days*, see Canevaro (2014).

35 See further Canevaro (2015) 99–114.

36 Brown (2000) 194.

εἰ μὴ ἐς Εὔβοιαν ἐξ Αὐλίδος, ἦ ποτ' Ἀχαιοί
μείναντες χειμῶνα πολὺν σὺν λαὸν ἄγειραν
Ἑλλάδος ἐξ ἱερῆς Τροίην ἐς καλλιγύναικα.
I shall show you the measure of the resounding sea,
though I am experienced in neither seafaring nor ships.
For I have never yet crossed the wide sea in a ship,
except to Euboea from Aulis, where once the Achaians,
waiting out the winter, gathered a great host to sail
from holy Greece to Troy of beautiful women.
Works and Days 648–653

He admits that he knows little about seafaring, which creates a paradox of the teacher ignorant of what he is teaching. Hesiod's ability to teach about seafaring, then, comes from two sources: the Muses (upon whom he calls at 658–662), and his didactic prowess in analogous matters (namely agriculture). As Hesiod is not experienced in seafaring, he is not depending on procedural memory here, on a skill that has become unconscious. Rather, he uses declarative memory in a very conscious way, combining episodic elements (his short trip from Aulis to Euboea) with semantic information gleaned from his divine teachers and his own ability to extrapolate from other spheres of activity. This has two effects, one related to the content of his teachings and the other to the way in which he conveys this content. First, the degree of distance between teacher and subject matter marked by this emphasis on declarative rather than procedural memory highlights a particular thread that runs throughout the poem: Hesiod's mistrust of seafaring.[37] It is presented as a necessary evil: a supplement to agriculture but not a satisfactory alternative. Hesiod's and Perses' father, forced to take to the seas, is the example not to follow. Second, by marking this out as conscious rather than unconscious knowledge, Hesiod gives his audience a way into his teachings. He does not present a skill which is habitual to him, the process of skill acquisition taken for granted. Rather, Hesiod's admission of ignorance frames this section as a test case for his didactic method. He will set an example for his audience, overcoming his ignorance by thinking for himself (the πανάριστος, using his knowledge of analogous matters) and by taking advice (the ἐσθλός,

37 For more on Hesiod and seafaring in the *Works and Days*, see Rosen (1990); Canevaro (2015) 127–133.

listening to the Muses). Furthermore, in applying knowledge from one field to another he proves his credentials as 'meta-strategizer'.

Gestalt: the Parts and the Whole

Nagler (1978) argued that Homeric type scenes are "an inherited preverbal Gestalt for the spontaneous generation of a 'family' of meaningful details": in other words that the intrinsic whole is embedded *in nuce* in every extraction. I would like to end this chapter by suggesting that the basic underlying idea of Gestalt psychology, namely that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, is something with which Hesiod's *Works and Days* has an affinity on a structural and conceptual level. This takes us back to the initial dichotomy I made between modes of reading the poem – linear and excerpting. In the former, parts are put together to make one coherent poem. However, models of circumstantial development such as Lamberton's (1988) idea of a "string of beads" which stem directly from tradition underestimate the overarching didactic force of the whole. To a certain extent, the *Works and Days* is the product of a pre-existing tradition, but this does not mean that the elements came together as a natural progression of the tradition. As Lardinois (2005) has persuasively argued, Greek proverbial expressions functioned like a hexameter line in an epic performance: stemming from a thematic core and made up of traditional formulae, they could be simultaneously both traditional and newly created. The arrangement of the *Works and Days* as we now have it seems the work of one person with a strong authorial voice and moral direction – or at least one didactic strategy maintained so as to appear to be the work of one person.[38] Each element, whether traditional or not, is selected with regard to the poem's overarching themes and tethered either by a contextualising line or by reference to a character or *topos* of the *Works and Days*.[39] The consistent moral impetus of the poem and the immanent persona of the narrator combine to tether these traditional building blocks together into something more.

38 I have argued at Canevaro (2015) 34–35 that there is a guiding intentionality behind the *Works and Days* – whether or not that force is singular, and called Hesiod. Questions of composition and reception work in tandem here: whilst I explore instances of the poem's reception in Chapter 1 of Canevaro (2015), in Chapter 2 I argue that the seeds of this reception are to be found in the poem itself. In terms of psychology, the introduction of Gestalt theory into the analysis highlights this interaction as it raises issues both of intentionality (the constructed whole, which is echoed in parts) and reception (tracing back to the intended whole from the part).

39 For more on tethering in the *Works and Days* see Canevaro (2015) 31–82.

In the excerpting reading, just like type scenes, the audience awareness devices I have discussed in this chapter embed the whole poem, its moral impetus and its didactic authority, into excerpts too. The most notable example of this is what I have called elsewhere the Hesiod stamp, the persona of the narrator, which guides our use and reuse of whatever elements we might detach from the poem.[40] Hesiod's teachings are formulated in an open and applicable way so that they can be reused in various circumstances, but because they were once part of Hesiod's project and retain something of his poetic authority even when detached, they are not open to *all* meanings. Hesiod wants everyone to learn something from his poem, but his message is not morally indeterminate. Components of the *Works and Days* may have begun as traditional precepts, but after circulating as part of the poem they become Hesiodic wisdom and acquire the authority associated with the poet. At work here are two related cognitive strategies. On the one hand, there is the cognitive ideals hypothesis, which argues that detachable didactic elements such as proverbs are designed to evoke universal standards, norms and ideals irrespective of the pragmatic particulars of their use.[41] This explains how these elements can be plucked from the tradition for reuse – and rendered again reusable by Hesiod. Honeck argues that "When all of the examples have faded from memory, the proverb emerges as a kind of ruin that symbolizes their passing".[42] From this perspective, proverbs and maxims find their cognitive value in abstraction, as it is in that way that they get into long-term memory. It is in this way, too, that they operate in later reception, and indeed this begins to explain the relevance we still find in ancient wisdom.[43] On the other hand, by activating episodic memory, the Hesiod stamp holds together, either in one place or in a wider network of receptions, the "miscellaneous and contrary urges" Nisbet writes about.

The founding fathers of Gestalt psychology emphasized the difference between pieces and parts, with Wertheimer (1923) arguing that parts are not primary, not pieces to be combined in and-summations, but parts of wholes. Whereas a piece is any random section and may not have meaning in and of itself, a part is part of a whole and, if the whole is sensible, each part must have a sensible interpretation. Hesiod's *Works and Days*, in its diversity of narrative forms and the individual cognitive challenges they pose, naturally falls into parts – but these parts are coloured by the whole, which in turn is shaped by the poet's persona.

40 On the Hesiod stamp see Canevaro 2015 (43–50). On Hesiodic reception e.g. Boys-Stones/Haubold (2010), Koning (2010), Hunter (2014), Van Noorden (2014).

41 Honeck (1997) 27.

42 Honeck (1997) 97–98.

43 See Honeck (1997) 36 on the universalist stance of the cognitive view.

Brown writes: "when adding together various contributions to wisdom, we must keep in mind that as an emergent property wisdom is, by definition, more than the sum of its constituent parts".[44] The interplay between parts and whole which is so central to Gestalt psychology and which Brown shows to be characteristic of 'wisdom' (whatever we take that to mean exactly) is key to the complex structure of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, the explicit and implicit audiences it targets, and the reuses and receptions it generates. Minchin comments on the relevance of Nagler's argument to the cognitive sciences: "Although Nagler declared that his reconstruction of composition was "highly speculative", cognitive research ... offers the necessary theoretical underpinning for his proposals; his pre-verbal Gestalt is no more and no less than the cognitive scientist's script".[45] The teachings Hesiod offers, too, operate as a cognitive script. On one level the *Works and Days* is an 828-line poem, which takes us from the mythical past to the present day, from cosmic considerations to details of bodily functions, through the education of Perses and of ourselves alongside him. On another level, however, the *Works and Days* is made up of parts: parts which can be detached and reapplied. These parts, in retaining something of the whole, provide cognitive schemata, teaching us how to think, how to act, how to learn – in accordance with the wider aims of the poem with which they are associated. However, in making his audience work for their lesson, Hesiod prevents such schemata from becoming habitual or automatic. The cognitive challenges presented by the *Works and Days* engage our executive functions, keeping us on our toes. Hesiod anticipates multiple audiences – and he anticipates that these audiences will find in his poetry something to satisfy their Need for Cognition.

44 Brown (2000) 311.
45 Minchin (2001) 40.